

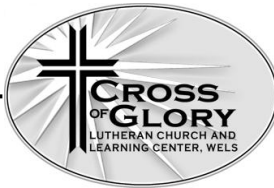


ASH

WEDNESDAY

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***Welcome! We are glad you are here with us today. Our service today follows an order of worship which places the spotlight on God's Word and its central message of peace through Jesus. You can follow the outline of the service in this worship folder. The page numbers and hymn numbers refer to the red hymnal: Christian Worship.***

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## ORDER OF SERVICE

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*There is no opening hymn.*

*Remain seated.*

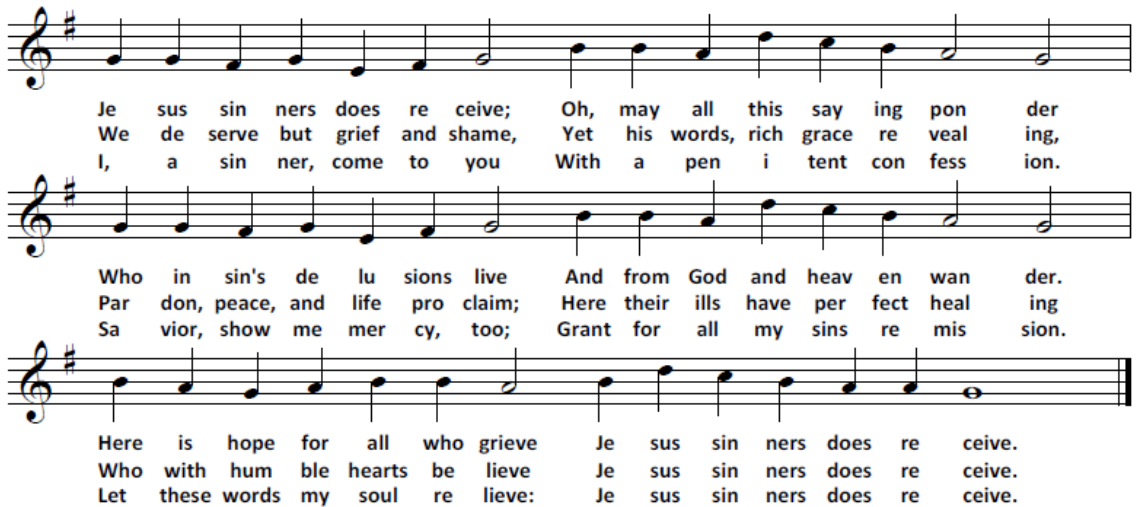
**M:** Brothers and sisters in Christ, God created us to know joy in communion with him, to love all humanity, and to live in harmony with all creation. But sin separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, and so we do not enjoy the life our Creator intended for us. By our sin we grieve our Father, who does not desire us to come under his judgment but to turn to him and live. Therefore, God in his mercy has sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take our place under the law, to suffer for us, and to die the death we deserve. God made Jesus, who had no sin, to be sin for us so that in him, we might become the righteousness of God.

During the 40 days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle. Let us be silent. Let us be still. Let us pause now for a time of reflection and self-examination.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION



Je sus sin ners does re ceive; Oh, may all this say ing pon der  
We de serve but grief and shame, Yet his words, rich grace re veal ing,  
I, a sin ner, come to you With a pen i tent con fess ion.

Who in sin's de lu sions live And from God and heav en wan der.  
Par don, peace, and life pro claim; Here their ills have per fect heal ing  
Sa vior, show me mer cy, too; Grant for all my sins re mis sion.

Here is hope for all who grieve Je sus sin ners does re ceive.  
Who with hum ble hearts be lieve Je sus sin ners does re ceive.  
Let these words my soul re lieve: Je sus sin ners does re ceive.

**M:** Most holy and merciful Father,

**C:** **We confess to you and to one another that we have sinned by our own fault,**  
**by our own grievous fault**  
**in thought, word, and deed,**  
**by what we have done,**  
**and by what we have left undone.**

**M:** We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

**C:** **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

**M:** We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us.  
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.  
We have grieved the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Have mercy on us, Lord.**

**M:** We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness.  
The pride, hypocrisy, and impatience in our lives

**C:** **We confess to you, O Lord.**

**M:** Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our manipulation of other people

**C:** **We confess to you, O Lord.**

**M:** Our anger when our selfish aims are denied and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves

**C:** **We confess to you, O Lord.**

**M:** Our love of worldly goods and comforts and our dishonesty in daily life and work

**C:** **We confess to you, O Lord.**

**M:** Our negligence in worship and prayer and our failure to show the faith that is in us

**C:** **We confess to you, O Lord.**

**M:** Forgive us, Lord, for the wrongs we have done. For our blindness to human need and suffering and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,

**C:** **Forgive us, O Lord.**

**M:** For all false judgments, for uncharitable thoughts toward others, and for our prejudice and contempt for those who differ from us,

**C:** **Forgive us, O Lord.**

**M:** For what we think or say or do that is at variance with your will,

**C:** **Forgive us, O Lord.**

**M:** Restore us, good Lord, and let your anger depart from us.

**C:** **Hear us, Lord, for your mercy is great.**

**M:** Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live.

Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C:** **Amen.**





## FIRST LESSON.....Isaiah 59:12-20

*For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities:<sup>13</sup> rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, fomenting oppression and revolt, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.<sup>14</sup> So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.<sup>15</sup> Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.<sup>16</sup> He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm worked salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.<sup>17</sup> He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.<sup>18</sup> According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.<sup>19</sup> From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.<sup>20</sup> "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins," declares the LORD.*

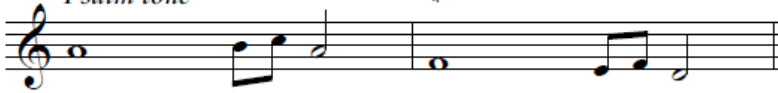
PSALM OF THE DAY.....Psalm 51A

*Refrain*



Be mer ci ful, O Lord, for we have sinned.

*Psalm tone*



Have mercy on 'me, O God,\*  
according to your un'failing love.

Wash away all my in'iquity,\*  
and cleanse me 'from my sin.

For I know my trans'gressions,\*  
and my sin is always be'fore me.

***Refrain***

Against you, you only, 'have I sinned\*  
and done what is evil 'in your sight.

Surely I was sin'ful at birth,\*  
sinful from the time my mother con'ceived me.

Hide your face 'from my sins,\*  
and blot out all my in'iquity.

Restore to me the joy of your sal'vation,\*  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sus'tain me.

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy 'Spirit,**  
**as it was in the be'ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

***Refrain***

**SECOND LESSON.....2 CORINTHIANS 5:20B – 6:2**

*We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. <sup>1</sup> As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. <sup>2</sup> For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

**VERSE OF THE DAY.....Joel 2:13**

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

STAND

**GOSPEL.....John 8:31-36**

*To the Jew who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

BE SEATED

**HYMN.....Savior, When in Dust to You (# 124)**

**MEDITATION: ON John 8:31-36 :**

*I Tell You the Truth: Anyone Who Sins Is a Slave to Sin*

**OFFERING**

*The members of Cross of Glory are happy to support its ministry with their financial gifts. If you are visiting us today, do not feel obligated to give an offering.*

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

**M:** Holy and righteous God, as we begin again the solemn spiritual journey of Lent, we come before you in deep humility. We confess that we are sinners, both by the nature we inherit and by the sinful thoughts and desires, words and actions that nature produces. Because of our sins, we deserve only your wrath and punishment. Yet you reveal yourself, not only as a God of holiness and justice but as a God of mercy and love. Despairing of our own merits and worthiness, and in response to your gracious invitation, we come pleading for your forgiveness.

**C:** Lord, have mercy on us for your holy name's sake.

**M:** You have revealed your love and mercy for us sinners in Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. You sent him into our world to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all people. Help us grasp by faith the great truth that the pain and suffering, the mockery and ridicule, and the death and punishment he endured should have been ours. Help us understand that in incomprehensible love he suffered and died for us.

**C:** **Lord, have mercy on us for Jesus’ sake.**

**M:** God of grace and mercy, may your Spirit continue to be with us as we follow the way of the cross. As we contemplate the story of our Savior’s passion, build us up in our faith. Renew in us the zeal to serve you by reflecting your love in our lives. Give us the desire and the ability to boldly proclaim the grace in which we stand, so that all for whom you lived and died may join us in fellowship now and in your presence forever.

**C:** **We offer our humble thanks and praise, our prayers and petitions, and ourselves in body and spirit to you, Lord God. Hear us, according to your promise, for Jesus’ sake. Amen**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**C:** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

**HYMN.....In Hopelessness and Near Despair (# 738)**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**M:** Lord God, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us from the fear of our enemies that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever.

**C:** **Amen.**

**BLESSING**

**M:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C:** **Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN.....Now the Light Has Gone Away (# 593)**

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